

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An apparatus, comprising:
a shaft;
a scoop, coupled to a distal end of the shaft, for collecting and holding a bolus
5 of a compressible medium, the compressible medium retaining a post-compressed shape; and
a former, coupled to the scoop and mating with the scoop, for molding and compressing the bolus into a generally spherical ball retained within the scoop.
2. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the compressible medium is snow.
3. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the scoop and the former include
10 opposing sections of a generally spherical shell.
4. The apparatus of claim 3 wherein the former includes an open position relative to the scoop and a closed position relative to the scoop, the former molding the bolus in the closed position.
5. The apparatus of claim 4 wherein said closed position substantially
15 juxtaposes said opposing sections of said shell.
6. The apparatus of claim 4 wherein said closed position mates said opposing sections of said shell.
5. The apparatus of claim 4 wherein the former is biased to the open position.
- 20 6. The apparatus of claim 5 wherein the former is operable to the closed position by one-handed manipulation of a proximal end of the shaft.
7. The apparatus of claim 5 further comprising a latching mechanism, coupled to said former, for inhibiting said former from returning to said open position.

8. 7The apparatus of claim 7 further comprising a release, coupled to said latch, for disengaging said latching mechanism and removing said inhibition of said former.

9. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the shaft is arched.

10. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the scoop is oriented relative to the
5 shaft such that the generally spherical ball is launchable from the scoop by swinging the shaft through an arc.

11. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the shaft includes a ski pole.

12. The apparatus of claim 11 wherein ski pole includes a snow basket on the first distal end.

10 13. The apparatus of claim 12 wherein the scoop is part of the snow basket.

14. The apparatus of claim 13 wherein the scoop is part of the former.

15. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said shaft and said scoop are coupled together using a mating system.

15 16. The apparatus of claim 15 wherein said mating system includes a threaded member coupled to one of said shaft and said scoop and a complementary member coupled to one of said shaft and said scoop.

17. A method for forming a throwable ball, comprising the steps of:
scooping a bolus of a compressible medium with a scoop coupled to a distal
20 end of a shaft, the compressible medium retaining a post-compressed shape; and
molding compressively the bolus into the scoop using a former coupled to the
distal end, wherein the molding step creates the ball retained in the scoop when a user
operates a proximal end of the shaft.

18. A ball throwing method, comprising the steps of:

scooping a bolus of a compressible medium with a scoop coupled to a distal end of a shaft by a user operating a proximal end of the shaft, the compressible medium retaining a post-compressed shape;

5 molding compressively the bolus into the scoop using a former coupled to the distal end, wherein the molding step creates the ball retained in the scoop without the user touching the former; and

swinging, using the proximal end, the shaft through an arc while the ball is retained by the scoop.

19. A method for forming a throwable snow object, comprising the steps
10 of:

operating a proximal end of a shaft having a snow object maker coupled to a distal end of the shaft to gather a bolus of snow into the snow object maker, the snow object maker comprising:

15 a scoop, coupled to the distal end, for receiving the bolus into a first concave portion, the first concave portion directed away from an operator when the proximal end is held for operation; and

a former, operatively coupled to the scoop, for compressively molding the bolus into the throwable object by selectively engaging a second concave portion of the former with the bolus received into the first concave portion;

20 molding the bolus into the throwable object by manipulation of the proximal end to operate the former to produce the throwable object in the first concave portion.

20. A method for throwing a snow object, comprising the steps of:

25 operating a proximal end of a shaft having a snow object maker coupled to a distal end of the shaft to gather a bolus of snow into the snow object maker, the snow object maker comprising:

a scoop, coupled to the distal end, for receiving the bolus into a first concave portion, the first concave portion directed away from an operator when the proximal end is held for operation; and

a former, operatively coupled to the scoop, for compressively molding the bolus into the throwable object by selectively engaging a second concave portion of the former with the bolus received into the first concave portion;

5 molding the bolus into the throwable object by manipulation of the proximal end to operate the former; and

swinging the shaft through an arc by operating the proximal end to launch the throwable object from the first concave portion.

21. An apparatus, comprising:

a shaft;

10 a scoop, coupled to a distal end of the shaft, for collecting and holding an object;

a trapper, coupled to said scoop and mating with said scoop, for retaining said object within the scoop when in a closed position, said trapper biased to an open position wherein said object may be collected and/or released; and

15 a latching mechanism, coupled to said trapper, for inhibiting said trapper from returning to said open position.

22. The apparatus of claim 21 further comprising a release, coupled to said latching mechanism, for disengaging said latching mechanism and removing said inhibition of said trapper.